

# Dramatic Turning Points in Brahms Lieder<sup>1</sup>

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As Kofi Agawu has observed, in nineteenth-century music the climax is of considerable aesthetic importance.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, according to Agawu, analyses of nineteenth-century music usually ignore this characteristic, and treat the climax as a mere foreground event. In an effort to rectify this situation, Agawu has developed a type of structural analysis that focuses on climaxes, or what he calls 'highpoints.' These 'highpoints' are usually the highest note of a song or phrase, a crucial harmonic goal, or a dissonance. Agawu analyzes a number of songs from Schumann's *Dichterliebe* in which the highpoints coincide with a dramatic moment in the text, usually with their trademark ironic

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<sup>2</sup>"Structural 'Highpoints' in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," *Music Analysis* 3/2 (July 1984): 159-60. See also, Kofi Agawu, "On Schubert's 'Der greise Kopf'," *In Theory Only* 8/1 (July 1984): 3-22.

endings. Although most nineteenth-century lieder do not end with such ironic twists, many do draw to a dramatic conclusion, and consequently Agawu's concept of highpoints seems to have wide ranging applications. In this article I will attempt to incorporate elements of Agawu's theory with Schenkerian analysis, and, by analyzing two Brahms songs, I will demonstrate that some types of highpoints are present even at the deepest structural levels.

In his articles on *Dichterliebe* and Schubert's "Der greise Kopf," Agawu specifically refutes the usefulness of reductive analysis to his theory. Indeed, he states that his analyses apply to the foreground level only.<sup>3</sup> Recently, however, he has acknowledged the usefulness of Schenkerian analysis in revealing text-music relationships, and in particular he cites articles by Charles Burkhart and Carl Schachter.<sup>4</sup> Both Burkhart and Schachter demonstrate that middleground structural levels may be related to a text, and Burkhart shows that unusual tonal structures (for instance the delay of the tonic until the end of a piece) can also be related to a text.<sup>5</sup> In his analysis of Schumann's "Schöne Fremde" (op. 39, no. 6), Burkhart suggests that the *Kopftön* (the first note of the fundamental line) is delayed until the last phrase of the song: The melody of the song gradually builds up to this point, then gently descends. This highpoint is not merely a surface trait, but extends to the deepest middleground structural level. Songs demonstrating this type of tonal structure seem to be a special group that can be related to Agawu's 'highpoints.' In his most recent article, Agawu notes the delayed *Kopftön* in Schumann's "Seit ich ihn gesehen" (*Frauenliebe und Leben*, no. 1), but he does not explicitly

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<sup>3</sup>"Structural 'Highpoints' in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," 166 and 176; and "On Schubert's 'Der greise Kopf'," 4, 21.

<sup>4</sup>Kofi Agawu, "Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century Lied," *Music Analysis* 11/1 (March 1992): 24-30.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Burkhart, "Departures from the Norm in Two Songs from Schumann's *Liederkreis*," *Schenker Studies*, ed. Hedi Siegel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 146-64. Carl Schachter, "Motive and Text in Four Schubert Songs," *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 61-76.

relate this type of structure to his highpoint theory.<sup>6</sup>

The *Kopft* usually arrives towards the beginning of a piece, and is then prolonged until the structural line begins its descent to scale degree 1. In some pieces, however, the entrance of the *Kopft* may be delayed by an arpeggiation.<sup>7</sup> This arpeggiation may vary in size and in the time that it is expanded: in some pieces it is delayed for only a few measures, while in others it is delayed until the very last measures. This is the case in the two Brahms songs that I will analyze, “Vorschneller Schwur” (op. 95, no. 5) and “Von ewiger Liebe” (op. 43, no. 1), as well as in at least two others, “Willst du, daß ich geh’?” (op. 71, no. 4), and “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer” (op. 105, no. 4).<sup>8</sup>

Schenker’s published analyses include a number of examples of pieces characterized by a delayed *Kopft*. For example, he places the *Kopft* of Schubert’s “Auf dem Flusse” (*Winterreise*, no. 7) in m. 53,<sup>9</sup> and that of the Scherzo to Beethoven’s third symphony in m. 123.<sup>10</sup> In pieces such as these, the long arpeggiation results in the *Kopft* being followed by an immediate descent, rather than by a lengthy prolongation. As Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert have noted, such long arpeggiations seem to overshadow the structural descent. They suggest that in such compositions “the initial gesture ... should maintain sufficient interest and continuity to keep up the feeling of

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<sup>6</sup>“Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century Lied,” 27.

<sup>7</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition (Der freie Satz)*, trans. & ed. Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 46-47.

<sup>8</sup>I discuss the two other songs in chapter 5 of my dissertation “Text-Music Relationships in the Lieder of Johannes Brahms” (City University of New York, Graduate Center, 1992).

<sup>9</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition*, fig. 40, 2. David Lewin disagrees with the analysis of “Auf dem Flusse”; see “‘Auf dem Flusse’: Image and Background in a Schubert Song,” *19th-Century Music* 6/1 (1982): 47-59.

<sup>10</sup>*Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, III (1930; reprint, by Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1974), fig. 33.

expectation that it should create.”<sup>11</sup> Such pieces are often characterized by a continual drive out of which the *Kopftón* finally emerges. The slow ascent of the melody and the gradually intensifying dynamic level build towards a climactic moment, which is often emphasized by changes in surface rhythms and figurations, or by a phrase expansion. Perhaps the most indisputable example of this type of structure is Schubert’s “Mein” (*Die schöne Müllerin*, no. 11). In this song the constantly rising arpeggios create a sense of expectancy, leading forward until the last line of stanza one, “Die geliebte Müllerin ist mein,” where the melody finally reaches the *Kopftón*, G#5 (m. 32). This exhilarating arrival coincides with the word “mein,” and it is emphasized by loud dynamics and by longer notes in the melody.

In *Free Composition*, Schenker precedes his discussion of arpeggiations to the *Kopftón* with an explanation of the related phenomenon, the initial ascent (that is, a stepwise ascent to the *Kopftón*). In this section he notes that during the ascent the bass may move away from the tonic “so that the first tone of the fundamental line appears over a [chord other than the tonic], effectively heightening the inner tension.”<sup>12</sup> As his examples illustrate, this effect may also occur in pieces using an arpeggiation rather than a stepwise ascent. In “Auf dem Flusse,” it occurs over a VI, and in “Die Stadt” (*Schwanengesang*, no. 11), it occurs over a 6/4.<sup>13</sup>

In his discussions of Schubert’s “Auf dem Flusse” and “Die Stadt,” Schenker does not mention how the late arrival of the *Kopftón* is related to the text. Nevertheless, one might well expect such an important structural climax to coincide with a similarly important event in the text. This is the case in Schubert’s “Mein,” which I described above, as well as in “Trockne Blumen” (*Die schöne Müllerin*, no. 18). In the latter, the arrival of the *Kopftón*, accompanied by a change in mode, from minor to major, conveys the transformation of withered flowers into springtime blossoms (m. 30). The *Kopftón*, scale degree

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<sup>11</sup>Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis (New York: Norton, 1982), 155.

<sup>12</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition*, 46, and fig. 40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., figs. 40, 2, and 103, 4, respectively.

3, arrives in m. 37 with the last line of the text: “der Mai ist kommen, der Winter ist aus!” (May is here, the winter is past!). This line is emphasized by loud dynamics, denser piano figuration, and the piano going above the voice, doubling it at a third (mm. 37-38).<sup>14</sup> The *Kopftón*, G#5, is the highest note of the song, and it is anticipated by the F#5s at the end of the preceding stanzas (mm. 14-15 and 28).<sup>15</sup>

Of course many songs draw to a climactic conclusion, but few actually have a delayed *Kopftón*. Indeed it would be an oversimplification of this structure to automatically interpret a high scale degree 3 or scale degree 5 at the end of a song as a structural tone, even if it coincides with an important moment or word in the text. For example, in Brahms’s quasi-operatic setting of Uhland’s “Heimkehr” (op. 7, no. 6) the last line reaches a *fortissimo* F#5 on the word “ich” (m. 13). This is the first time the speaker refers to himself, and the importance of this moment is further underscored by the thicker texture and a slight slowing of the tempo. Nevertheless, this note is not the *Kopftón*, but a cover tone that remains in force for the rest of the piece. In Uhland’s poem, the protagonist rushes towards his sweetheart, pleading that the footbridge not break, nor the skies fall, before he arrives. The high F# is repeated through the last phrases of the song and frequently coincides with the repeated word “ich.” That the F# does not descend to the tonic suggests that the character has not completed his journey.<sup>16</sup>

In Brahms’s “Vorschneller Schwur” and “Von ewiger Liebe,” the *Kopftón* coincides with a pivotal moment in the text—an important decision or an event that will fundamentally change the characters’ lives. I refer to these moments as dramatic turning points. Every aspect

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<sup>14</sup>Arnold Feil also describes this climactic passage, and in particular its metric structure; see *Franz Schubert: ‘Die schöne Müllerin’; ‘Winterreise’*, trans. Ann C. Sherwin (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988), 78-79.

<sup>15</sup>Despite this exhilarating arrival, the piano’s postlude returns to the minor mode in anticipation of the next song—the protagonist’s happiness was but an illusion.

<sup>16</sup>Although it is possible to read a descent from F#5 to the tonic in the inner voice of the piano part, the melody descends only as far as D#5 (scale degree 3).

of Brahms's music emphasizes these focal points, from such foreground features as dynamics to structural events including a change in mode from minor to major, an expanded phrase, motivic developments, and the ascent of the structural line to the *Kopftón*. In this way, the text's turning point is even suggested by the contour of the top line of the fundamental structure.

Not all delayed arrivals of the *Kopftón* coincide with such dramatic turning points. Indeed, most of the songs by Schubert and Schumann that are characterized by this type of delay do not fit into this category. In "Auf dem Flusse," the *Kopftón* is reached in the final line, during which the man recognizes the image of his heart in the frozen river. Here the arrival underscores a wrenching irony, rather than a turning point. A gradual ascent to the *Kopftón* may also be a metaphor for a glimpse of something in the distance or future. For instance, Burkhart suggests that the arpeggiation to the *Kopftón* in "Schöne Fremde" (op. 39, no. 6) represents the poem's theme of "a gradual progression to a distant goal."<sup>17</sup> In Schubert's "Die Stadt," the arpeggiation takes place during the first stanza, which describes the city wrapped in evening mist.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in Schumann's "Seit ich ihn gesehen," the *Kopftón* arrives as the woman describes her sweetheart emerging from her dreams.<sup>19</sup>

Although a delayed *Kopftón* and a dramatic turning point may be considered special types of 'highpoints,' they differ from Agawu's 'highpoints' in a number of ways. The *Kopftón* is one of the most

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<sup>17</sup>"Departures from the Norm," 158.

<sup>18</sup>David Schwarz has a slightly different reading of the first stanza of "Die Stadt" from Schenker (*Free Composition*, fig. 103, 4). According to Schwarz, the first two stanzas reach the *Kopftón* by step, while the last approaches it by an arpeggio. He interprets this change as reflecting the psychological development of the poem, in which the protagonist only recalls his rejection in the final stanza. "The Ascent and Arpeggiation in *Die Stadt*, *Der Doppelgänger*, and *Der Atlas* by Franz Schubert," *Indiana Theory Review* 7/1 (spring 1986): 39-45.

<sup>19</sup>Agawu, "Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century Lied" (p. 27) has a slightly different reading and interpretation of this song. Whereas he places the *Kopftón* in m. 8, I place it in m. 12.

important notes of the tonal structure, and its arrival is supported by foreground events, including changes in surface rhythms, dynamics, and piano figuration. By contrast, Agawu places a number of parameters, such as duration, harmony, melody, and texture, on a fairly equal footing.<sup>20</sup> In each of the following Brahms songs the *Kopft*on is one of the highest notes of the vocal line, which is not always the case with Agawu's 'highpoints.' His definition of 'highpoint' is deliberately flexible, for instance a highpoint may be a startling dissonance, as he demonstrates in his analysis of *Dichterliebe*, no. 4.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the types of ironic reversals in the Heine poems of *Dichterliebe*, which Agawu discusses, are not equivalent to my turning points. Heine's ironic endings are surprising, and often seem to create a disruption.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, the texts of Brahms's "Vorschneller Schwur" and "Von ewiger Liebe" draw to an inevitable climax. Similarly, as I will demonstrate, every aspect of the music builds to this point.

"Vorschneller Schwur" (op. 95, no. 5)

Brahms found the text of "Vorschneller Schwur" in a collection of Serbian folksongs translated into German by Siegfried Kapper.<sup>23</sup> In

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<sup>20</sup>Agawu concludes that this type of equality is an important characteristic of nineteenth-century music; see "Structural 'Highpoints' in Schumann's *Dichterliebe*," 165-66.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 173-75.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>23</sup>Siegfried Kapper, *Die Gesänge der Serben* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1852), 76. Although Kapper titled the poem "Wie das Mädchen vorschnell schwört," at first Brahms did not use a title at all. Only after the prompting of his publisher Fritz Simrock did he indicate that the song could be printed under Kapper's title or as "Vorschneller Schwur." See Brahms's letter to Simrock of September 27, 1884; in *Johannes Brahms: Briefe an P. J. Simrock und Fritz Simrock*, ed. Max Kalbeck, (1917; reprint, Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1974), 71-72.

the first stanza a young girl promises never to pick flowers, drink wine, or kiss boys, but in the second she realizes she would be much happier if she revoked all three vows.<sup>24</sup> In Kapper's edition, the second stanza begins with two lines spoken by the narrator. Brahms copied this arrangement into his notebook of texts, but he decided to move these two lines back to the first stanza, so that the second includes only the words spoken by the girl (Figure 1). He indicated this change by placing a large square bracket beside the girl's lines.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 1. Text of "Vorschneller Schwur"

Kapper

Schwor ein junges Mädchen:  
Blumen nie zu tragen,  
Blumen nie zu tragen,  
niemals Wein zu trinken,  
niemals Wein zu trinken,  
Knaben nie zu küssen.

Gestern schwor das Mädchen  
heute schon bereut es:  
"Wenn ich Blumen trüge,  
wär ich doch noch schöner!  
Wenn ich Rotwein tränke,  
wär ich doch noch froher!  
Wenn den Liebsten küsste,  
wär mir doch noch wohler!"

Brahms

Schwor ein junges Mädchen:  
Blumen nie zu tragen,  
Blumen nie zu tragen,  
niemals Wein zu trinken,  
niemals Wein zu trinken,  
Knaben nie zu küssen.

Gestern schwor das Mädchen  
heute schon bereut es:

"Wenn ich Blumen trüge,  
wär ich doch noch schöner!  
Wenn ich Rotwein tränke,  
wär ich doch noch froher!  
Wenn den Liebsten küsste,  
wär mir doch noch wohler,  
Wenn den Liebsten küsste,  
wär mir doch noch wohler!"

This song is in strophic variation form, and Brahms conveys the girl's newfound optimism of stanza 2 by changing the tempo and mode,

<sup>24</sup>An English translation of the text of each Brahms song is printed in the Appendix.

<sup>25</sup>The notebook is now housed at the Wien Stadt - und Landesbibliothek, Ia 79.563, 8r.



using a predominantly higher register, more ornamentation, and a smoother text alignment.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the melody of the second stanza is much more graceful than the first. In stanza 1, the initial rising third (D5-F5) is followed by a precipitous drop in register, and the rest of the first phrase centers on A4 (mm. 1-4, Example 1). By comparison, the first phrases in each period of the second stanza frequently return to the upper register (mm. 35-38, 43-46, and 51-54). In these phrases the melody implies two lines: the first continues the initial high register (D5, F#5, E5, D5), while the second remains around A4. Similarly, in the third phrase the upper line continues up to A5 and then descends, while the lower line sustains A4. The changes in the rhythmic patterns also contribute to the new mood of stanza 2. In the first stanza, the bass notes fall on the second beat, conveying the young girl's awkwardness, but these syncopations are discontinued in stanza 2, where the accompaniment flows along in eighths instead of quarters. Similarly, the cadences at the end of each period in stanza 2 have a dotted rhythm, rather than the halting half-notes of mm. 7 and 23. Aside from these variations, the girl's change in heart is mapped out by the arpeggiation to the *Kopfton*, which arrives in m. 52. This arrival coincides with her last and most important decision.

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<sup>26</sup>The text of stanza 1 includes a number of line repetitions, but these repetitions are not synchronized with Brahms's repetitions of the initial period of music. For instance, lines 2 and 3 are the same, but Brahms sets line 2 to the consequent of the first period (mm. 5-8) and line 3 to the antecedent of the second (mm. 9-12). Similarly, lines 4 and 5 are the same but they are also set to different music (mm. 13-16 and 17-20). Owing to the line repetitions and to Brahms's repeated period of music, the preposition "zu" in lines 3 and 5 is given an entire measure (mm. 11 and 19).

In the second stanza there are no line repetitions and the repeated period of music is coordinated with the text in a much more satisfactory manner. Here the antecedent and consequent phrases of music are paired with the text's cause and effect couplets. Furthermore, the most important word of each line consistently falls in the measures in which Brahms draws out the declamation rate to fit the lines of text across four measures (see, for example, mm. 36-37 and 41-42). Perhaps the text setting of these two stanzas has a programmatic purpose. In the first stanza the repetitions and accentuation contribute to the portrayal of an awkward young girl, whereas the more appropriate text alignment in the second suggests her newfound gracefulness and assuredness.



Example 1. (continued)

*Animato ma grazioso*  
*Anmutig belebt*

35 „Wenn ich Blu - men - trü - ge, wär ich doch noch schö - ner! Wenn ich

*dolce*

44 Rot - wein - trän - ke, wär ich doch noch fro - her! Wenn den Lieb -

*cresc. ed animato*

53 sten - küß - te, wär mir doch noch woh - - - ler, wenn den Lieb - sten

62 küß - te, wär mir doch noch woh - - - ler!“

“Vorschneller Schwur” begins with an eight-measure period, which is repeated, and slightly varied, as the second period (mm. 1-8 and 9-16). The third period further varies the first: it includes a tonicization of B♭ major and its second phrase begins on D5, rather than on F4 (m. 21). These changes, along with the louder dynamics, emphasize the importance of the girl’s third vow, never to kiss boys.

Stanza 2 has a somewhat similar succession of phrases. It begins with two variations of the initial eight-measure period (now in major, mm. 35-42 and 43-50). The third period is also based on the first, but, as in stanza 1, it is significantly altered (mm. 51-59). The initial rising third (D5-F#5) is repeated, but it is marked *crescendo ed animato* and the melody rises to A5, the highest note of the song (m. 52), on the word “Liebsten.” This is the first time the girl has mentioned a sweetheart; in the third period of the first stanza she promised not to kiss *boys*, but now, in the third period of the second, she says if she kissed her *sweetheart* she would be happier.<sup>27</sup> Brahms emphasizes this crucial line in a number of ways: Aside from the high A5 on “Liebsten,” the word “küßte” (m. 54) is set to a cadence on E minor, which includes a 7-8 appoggiatura, and “wohler” is ornamented. This ornament is the longest embellishment in the song (mm. 57-59), and it creates a phrase expansion.

The phrase including the word “wohler” begins in m. 55 and ends in m. 59. But as the voice concludes this phrase the piano begins another, and Brahms draws attention to it by marking the right hand of the piano part *forte*. After a quarter rest, the voice joins this new phrase in its second measure, and the repeated fifth line of the poem is compressed into three measures (mm. 60-62). These three measures coincide with the second, third, and fourth measures of the piano’s phrase. The following phrase uses a similar expansion on “wohler,” and it overlaps with the beginning of the piano’s four-measure postlude (mm. 63-67, 67-70). This is an unusual phrase expansion because the piano retains four-measure groups, while the voice expands to a five-measure phrase, then compresses to three measures, and again

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<sup>27</sup>The second vow in stanza 2 is also altered from never to drink wine to never to drink red wine, but it is the change to the final vow that is the most significant.

expands to five. (It is more typical for the piano to follow the melody.) While the expansion on the word “wohler” emphasizes the girl’s belief that she will feel much better if she kisses her sweetheart, the melody’s shorter phrases and the phrase overlaps vividly convey her excitement.

Much of the melody is built on the tonic triad, and some of these triadic figures are shown in Example 2. Most of the periods open with the expectant rising third, D5-F5, followed by the fifth of the triad in the lower octave. This descending leap frustrates the expectation that the triad will fulfill itself with the higher A, and it creates an uneasy feeling, suggesting that all is not well. The motivic importance of the initial third is further evident in mm. 25-34, when a series of thirds, along with changes in the accompaniment figuration, softer dynamics, and pauses at the end of each phrase, suggest that something dramatic is about to happen. The change of mode, and the first two notes of the second stanza, are anticipated in the last measures of the first, when a tonic triad arpeggiates up an octave from F#4 (mm. 31-34). Stanza 2 repeats the rising major third, D5-F#5, and its first two periods still descend to A4. Only at the beginning of the third period, on the word “Liebsten,” does the melody continue the arpeggio up to A5 (m. 52), which is embellished by the preceding A4. Now for the first time, the initial rising third is answered by the fifth in the same register, and the uneasy, opening melody is transformed into a graceful ascent. This tonic triad in the upper register is recalled in the closing notes of the melody (mm. 64-66), where the recurrence of A5 associates the word “wohler” with the earlier “Liebsten” (Example 2).

The motivic design, melodic contour, dynamics, and a phrase expansion all point to the importance of the last promise in stanza 2, and particularly to the word “Liebsten.” This emphasis is also reflected in the tonal structure, as demonstrated by the graph in Example 3. In the top line, the initial D5 arpeggiates to F5, and it is prolonged until the end of the fourth period, when it is inflected to F#. Stanza 2 again begins on D5 but this time it arpeggiates to F#5, and it is prolonged through the following two periods. Finally, the melody arpeggiates to the climactic A5 (m. 52), and it is this note that I read

as the *Kopftón*.<sup>28</sup> The *Kopftón* completes the triad that has been expanded from the beginning of the song, as well as the triad in the foreground (mm. 51-52). Furthermore, this structural arrival underscores the most important event of the song, for it is the kiss of the sweetheart that will have the greatest effect on the girl's life.

Example 2. Triadic transformations in "Vorschneller Schwur"

①                      ⑤                      ③①

⑤①                      ⑥④

Liebsten                      woh - - ler

Example 3. Reduction of "Vorschneller Schwur"

5̂ 4̂ 3̂ 2̂ 1̂

ant.

①                      ②⑧                      ③⑤                      ⑤①                      ⑥⑤                      ⑥⑦

I                      V                      I

stanza 1                      stanza 2

<sup>28</sup>It may seem, on first glance, that the A5 is too fleeting and metrically weak to be the *Kopftón*. This rhythmic placement, however, is part of the melody's subtle syncopations, and the F5/F#5 also appear on weak beats.

There are a number of other ways to interpret “Vorschneller Schwur,” but I believe that they are less effective, primarily because they do not reflect as clearly the importance of the triadic motive or the dramatic narrative. It may be possible to read the entire song from scale degree 3. This interpretation would have the advantage of acknowledging the importance of the initial rising third, but it would ignore the climactic A5, on which the whole song is focussed. Alternatively, the melody could be analyzed as a prolongation of A4 until m. 52, where it is transferred up an octave. Although such an interpretation takes the climactic arrival of A5 into consideration, it overlooks the significance of the opening third, as well as the emphasis given to its two notes, D5 and F♯5/F♯5. Throughout the song these notes are accorded special attention, and even in the first measure Brahms draws attention to them. Instead of accompanying the initial D5-F5 with full chords, like the rest of the first phrase, he doubles each note at an octave. This texture occurs not only in m. 1, but also at the beginning of each of the two following periods (mm. 9 and 17). In m. 21, D5 emphasizes the word “Knaben.” As I have already shown, the vow not to kiss boys is the most important, and Brahms further draws attention to this word by marking it *mezzo forte*. The next period also begins with D5-F5, but now Brahms uses full chords, and changes the texture. This period forms a transition into the next stanza, and during its consequent phrase the mode changes, and the first two notes of stanza 2, D5-F♯5, are anticipated (mm. 33-34). The first F♯, however, occurs in the piano on the word “heute” (m. 29), and this contrasts with the preceding F♯ of “gestern” (m. 25). This transformation mirrors the song’s large-scale contrast between minor and major, which symbolizes the girl’s new-found confidence. The second stanza begins with the dyad D5-F♯5, but this time Brahms emphasizes the F♯5 by an accent in the piano (m. 35). This note coincides with the introduction of the first person pronoun, and Brahms’s accent underlines the poem’s shift from a narration in the third person to the more intimate first person. (Brahms’s alterations to the stanzaic structure of the poem, which are described above, clearly emphasize the importance of this change.)

“Vorschneller Schwur” is a strophic-variation setting, and both

stanzas begin with an ascending third. Nevertheless, Brahms's tonal structure suggests another way to interpret the form. Measures 1-24 comprise the first section, providing a list of the three vows; mm. 25-34 form a transition, in which there is a temporal change from "gestern" to "heute"; mm. 35-50 introduce the character herself, and they convey her new attitude to flowers and wine; finally, mm. 51-70, including the climactic A5, set the girl's last and most important resolution to kiss her sweetheart. Only the reading of the gradual arpeggiation to the *Kopfton* reflects this unfolding drama.

A number of Brahms's settings of folk-texts change from tonic minor to tonic major in the last stanza. For instance, in "Spannung" (op. 84, no. 5) a girl tries to dissuade her lover, but he wears her down, and in the last stanza she gives her consent in the tonic major. The texture of many of these songs is fairly complex, and, by comparison, "Vorschneller Schwur" seems to be quite simple. Indeed, Craig Bell went so far as to describe it as "indifferently authentic" and he concludes that it "does not rise above pleasant mediocrity."<sup>29</sup> On further analysis, however, one finds a sophisticated structure that sensitively portrays a turning point in a young girl's maturation.

"Von ewiger Liebe" (op. 43, no. 1)

"Von ewiger Liebe" is among the most loved, and best known, of Brahms's songs. His contemporaries and early biographers, including Hermann Deiters, praised it for its depth of expression,<sup>30</sup> and Brahms himself suggested to Deiters that it was one of the songs "of which he thought most highly."<sup>31</sup> Although "Von ewiger Liebe" was composed some twenty years before "Vorschneller Schwur," the two

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<sup>29</sup>Craig Bell, *The Lieder of Brahms* (Darley: The Grian-Aig Press, 1979), 113.

<sup>30</sup>Hermann Deiters, "Johannes Brahms," in *Sammlung Musikalischer Vorträge*, ed. Paul Graf Waldersee (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1880), 359.

<sup>31</sup>This observation is reported by Florence May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, 2nd ed. (1905; reprint, Neptune City, N.Y.: Paganiniana Publications, 1981), II: 415.



songs have many structural features in common. In addition to the delayed *Kopftön*, the final stanzas of both songs are characterized by a change in mode, from minor to major, and a relaxation of the rhythmic tensions of the preceding stanzas. Moreover, both songs have a number of characters, who are distinguished by melodic and accompanimental figures. The texts of the two songs are also somewhat similar. In “Vorschneller Schwur” the first stanza is spoken by a narrator, and the second by the girl, who is the center of the story. “Von ewiger Liebe” also begins with a stanza spoken by a narrator, and it is followed by stanzas for the two characters, a boy and his sweetheart (Figure 2). Whereas the music of “Vorschneller schwur” echoes the folksong characteristics of the text, “Von ewiger Liebe” is an ambitious structure, and its symphonic structure was praised by Wolf.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, as in “Vorschneller schwur,” there are many intricate details that contribute to the text-music synthesis, including a chromatic conflict between A♯ and A♭, which is often associated with linear progressions of a fourth or sixth.

In the first stanza, the narrator sets the scene of a couple emerging from a village at dusk.<sup>33</sup> The narrator introduces the boy who questions the couple’s relationship, but becomes agitated at the thought of separating. His insecurity is conveyed by the hollow dominant chords, in which the thirds are omitted,<sup>34</sup> and by the rising steps that

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<sup>32</sup>Hugo Wolf, in a review of a performance by Hermann Riedel on April 3, 1887; see *The Music Criticism of Hugo Wolf*, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979), 274. According to Robert Kahn, Wolf’s praise caused Brahms to say the following: “You can’t trust anyone these days; now even he is beginning to praise me!”; see “Recollections of Johannes Brahms,” trans. Reinhard G. Pauly, *The Musical Quarterly* 74/4 (1990): 605.

<sup>33</sup>According to Margit McCorkle (*Thematisch-Bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* [Munich: Henle, 1984], 155), the text of “Von ewiger Liebe” was translated from Wendisch by Leopold Haupt. Brahms incorrectly wrote on the autograph that the text was by Joseph Wenzig. Eric Sams also discusses the origins of this text but it would appear that he was not familiar with the Haupt translation, and he suggests that Brahms used a translation by Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (see “Zwei Brahms-Rätsel,” *Österreichische Musikzeitung* 27/2 [1972]: 83).

<sup>34</sup>See mm. 46, 48, 52, 56, and 60.

end many of the phrase segments (Example 4).<sup>35</sup> The narrator reenters at the beginning of the third stanza and introduces the girl who puts aside the boy's doubts.<sup>36</sup> For her stanza, Brahms changes to the major mode, changes the meter to a pastoral 6/8, and begins in a slower, more relaxed tempo. This stanza is divided into two sections (mm. 79-98 and 99-121); the second is mostly the same as the first except for the last phrase, which ends on the tonic rather than the dominant. Each of the stanzas has a successively higher melodic range. The melody of the first stanza moves around A4, while that of the second moves around D5. At the beginning of the third stanza the narrator, with his lower register, introduces the girl. Her song begins on F#4 and, unlike the boy's descending lines, her phrases blossom out, getting higher and higher until reaching F#5. This overwhelming climax beautifully captures the importance of the girl's promise of eternal love, and it is this note that I read as the *Kopftön*.

Brahms evokes the dark foreboding night, described in the first stanza, through a minor key, low registers, and a syncopated bass. The melody of the first four measures is placed in the bass of the prelude, and it contains many of the ideas that recur throughout the song, including the motive G, E, F# (m. 4) and the descent D to F# (mm. 3-4). The descending sixth influences much of the melodic motion on the surface as well as the middleground of all three stanzas. As shown in Example 5, the descending sixth composes out two voices. The bottom line moves from B2 down to F#2, which is ornamented by E2. This motive resembles the descending bass lines frequently used in laments, and perhaps here it alludes to the questioning mood of the boy. The top

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<sup>35</sup>In mm. 51-52, 54-60, 64-65, and 67-68, the phrase segments end with a rising semitone, but the four other segments close with the whole step B4-C#5.

<sup>36</sup>Max Kalbeck (*Johannes Brahms* [Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1910-14], II: 128) notes that Brahms originally used the melody of mm. 99-106 for his "Brautgesang," which he composed three years earlier for the Hamburg Frauenchor. Eric Sams (*Brahms Songs*, BBC Music Guides [Seattle: Washington University Press, 1972], 30) also compares the two settings, and George Bozarth has described the surviving sources of the earlier work in "The 'Lieder' of Johannes Brahms—1868-1871: Studies in the Chronology and Compositional Process" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1978), 51-52.

line descends in parallel thirds from D3 to A#2 (which, in the foreground, is displaced by an octave). Despite the A# conclusion, the preceding C# is supported by an A♭. This conflict between the flattened and raised seventh permeates the entire song.

Figure 2. “Von ewiger Liebe”

Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld!  
 Abend schon ist es, nun schweiget die Welt.  
 Nirgend noch Licht und nirgend noch Rauch,  
 Ja, und die Lerche sie schweiget nun auch.  
 Kommt aus dem Dorfe der Bursche heraus,  
 Gibt das Geleit der Geliebten nach Haus,  
 Führt sie am Weidengebüsche vorbei,  
 Redet so viel und so mancherlei:

“Leidest du Schmach und betrübtest du dich,  
 Leidest du Schmach von andern um mich,  
 Werde die Liebe getrennt so geschwind,  
 Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.  
 Scheide mit Regen und scheide mit Wind,  
 Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.”

Spricht das Mägdelein, Mägdelein spricht:  
 “Unsere Liebe, sie trennet sie nicht!  
 Fest ist der Stahl und das Eisen gar sehr,  
 Unsere Liebe ist fester noch mehr.  
 Eisen und Stahl, man schmiedet sie um,  
 Unsere Liebe, wer wandelt sie um?  
 Eisen und Stahl, sie können zergehen,  
 Unsere Liebe muß ewig bestehen.”

## Example 4. "Von ewiger Liebe" (op. 43, no. 1)

Mäßig

Singstimme

Piano

*p*

Dun . kel, wie

dun . kel in Wald und in Feld! A . bend schon ist es, nun schwei . get die

Welt. Nir . gend noch Licht und nir . gend noch Rauch, ja,

12

Example 4. (continued)

18

und die Ler . che sie schwei . get nun auch.

23

Kommt aus dem Dor . fe der Bur . sche her . aus,

29

gibt das Ge . leit der Ge . lieb . ten nach Haus, führt sie am

35

We i . den . ge . bü . sche vor . bei, re . det so viel und so man . cher.

## Example 4. (continued)

41  
lei: „Lei - dest du

46  
Schmach und be - trü - best du dich, lei - dest du Schmach von

51  
an - dern um mich, wer - de die Lie - be ge - trennt so ge -

56  
schwind, schnell wie wir frü - her ver - ei - ni - get sind.

*poco più f*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The tempo and dynamics are indicated by markings such as *mf* and *poco più f*. The lyrics are in German and are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, flowing line in the left hand.

Example 4. (continued)

41  
Schei . de mit Re . . gen und schei . de mit Wind,

*sempre più f e poco string.*

45  
schnell wie wir frü . her ver . ei . ni . get sind.

70  
*dimin. e ritard. poco*

75  
*p poco*

## Example 4. (continued)

79 *Ziemlich langsam*

Spricht das Mäg - de - lein, Mäg - de - lein spricht: „Un - se - re

*pp dolce*

84 *un poco animato e*

Lie - be, sie tren - net sich nicht! Fest ist der Stahl und das

*un poco animato e*

89 *cresc.*

Ei - sen gar sehr, un - se - re Lie - be ist fe - ster noch

*cresc.*

94 *dim.* *un poco ritard.*

mehr.



Example 4. (continued)

99  
 Ei - sen und Stahl, — man schmie - det sie um, un - se - re Lie - be, wer

*p dolce*

105  
 wan - delt sie um? Ei - sen und Stahl, sie kön - nen zer -

*un poco animato e cresc.*

*p*

*un poco animato e cresc.*

110  
 gehn, un - se - re Lie - be, un - se - re Lie - be muß

115  
 e - wig, e - wig be - stehn!"

*ritard. molto*

*p*

## Example 5. Reduction of "Von ewiger Liebe," mm. 1-4

The chromatic conflict recurs when the prelude theme (and its associated descending fourth) is repeated in mm. 6-8, and extended in mm. 8-12 (Example 6). In the middleground, the first phrase's descending fourth ends on A $\sharp$ 4 (m. 8), as before, but the second phrase tonicizes the mediant and its fourth ends on A $\flat$ 4 (m. 11). At a deeper level, the descending sixth is repeated in both sections of the first stanza (mm. 1-21 and 21-41): beginning on D5 it falls a third to B4 in m. 18, and then onto F $\sharp$ 4, via A $\flat$ 4. This fourth is a repetition of the fourth in the lowest voice of mm. 3-4 (Example 5), and like the earlier passage, the chords surrounding the A $\flat$  include A $\sharp$ s.

Stanza 2 begins with a rising sixth, from F $\sharp$ 4 to D5 (mm. 45-49). The second phrase, however, reverses this motion (mm. 49-52), and the stanza as a whole is characterized by descending lines (Example 7). During this stanza the conflict between the flat and sharp seventh seems to resolve in favor of A $\flat$ , which recurs in the melody. By contrast, A $\sharp$  appears only at the final cadence (mm. 67-68), and then in an inner voice rather than in the melody.

## Example 6. Reduction of “Von ewiger Liebe,” stanza 1

## Example 7. Reduction of “Von ewiger Liebe,” stanza 2

The conflict resurfaces in the last stanza, but this time it is resolved in favor of A#. In mm. 84-88, A♭s appear as passing or neighbor notes, but from m. 89 onwards they are replaced by A#s. In mm. 91-98, A# is prolonged in an inner voice, and it is ornamented first by Gx (mm. 91 and 94-95) and then by A♭ (mm. 96-98). In this way, A♭ is enwrapped by A#—just as the boy is reassured, in a way cradled, by the girl. Nevertheless, the A♭s return during the second

section. This time, however, the A $\sharp$  resolves up to the tonic in m. 113, and only the raised seventh is used in the phrase in which the girl declares everlasting love (mm. 113-117).

Aside from the A $\flat$  and A $\sharp$  neighbor motions, the chromatic conflict is also present in the two descending fourths from B4, which span stanza 3's first section. As shown in Example 8, the first descends via A $\flat$  (and ends in m.91), but the second descends via A $\sharp$  (and ends in m. 94). This second fourth is the major mode version of the fourth that appeared in the lower part of the prelude, and was expanded during stanza 1 (Example 5).<sup>37</sup>

Example 8. Reduction of "Von ewiger Liebe," mm. 79-98

Just as the final stanza resolves the A $\flat$ /A $\sharp$  conflict of stanzas 1 and 2, so too it transforms their uneasy, syncopated rhythmic patterns. In the first stanza the syncopated rhythm of the bass creates an unsettled atmosphere. The last eighth of each measure should lead to a note on the downbeat of the next measure, but this note is unexpectedly replaced by a rest (Example 9). Throughout the second stanza the piano and voice repeat a syncopated pattern, which is derived

<sup>37</sup>It may also be possible to read a descending fourth from D $\sharp$ 5 to A $\sharp$ 4 during this section. This motion doubles the major mode fourth (B4 to F $\sharp$ 4) at a third, and involves implying a D $\sharp$ 5 at the beginning of the stanza.

from the pattern in the first stanza and is frequently associated with the notes F $\sharp$ -B.<sup>38</sup> The ostinato in the third stanza transforms this syncopated pattern into an easy rocking motion, and it inverts the second stanza's dyad to B-F $\sharp$ .

Example 9. "Von ewiger Liebe," mm. 5-6, 46-47, and 79-80



The three-note motive at the end of the prelude (m. 4, Examples 5 and 10) also recurs throughout the song, and, like the chromatic conflict of A $\sharp$  and A $\flat$ , it can also be associated with the progress of the narrative. In addition to the original form, this motive appears in inversion and intervallically expanded forms, and is sometimes prolonged throughout a phrase. I refer to the original motive as x and the inversion as z, and both versions appear with their third filled in (Example 10a). These motives are especially prominent in the vocal line of the first stanza, but they also appear in the other stanzas.<sup>39</sup> During the second stanza most of the repetitions occur in the final period, when the boy suggests separating, and in the following interlude. For example, the eighth notes of m. 63 form transpositions of the two basic motives (Example 10b). The same pitches that are used here for motive x reappear in stanza 3 in the form of motive z. This motive occurs at the climax of the first section of stanza 3, where the

<sup>38</sup>This second pattern also occurs in mm. 12, 14, 16, 20, and 40 of the first stanza.

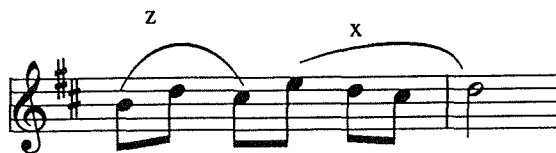
<sup>39</sup>For example, mm. 14-17 comprise z followed by x; and x is expanded in mm. 18-20, 75-76, and 93-94.

girl says their love is stronger than iron or steel (mm. 91-94, Example 10c). Although this moment is underscored by increases in tempo, rhythmic activity, and chromaticism, the dynamic level rises only to *mezzo forte*. The melody reaches up to D $\sharp$ 5 and then quickly falls back to F $\sharp$ 4 (with the D $\sharp$ 5 being resolved by the piano's C $\sharp$ 5). The same motive recurs during the final phrase (m. 111-17), which begins with a repetition of mm. 91-92. After these two measures, however, the accompaniment changes, the girl pauses, and, as she reaches her highest note (F $\sharp$ 5), she proclaims eternal love. This melodic climax is accompanied by a *crescendo* that begins in m. 111 and reaches *forte* as the F $\sharp$ 5 arrives (m. 113). During this *crescendo* the C $\sharp$  transposition of z is repeated, but now it resolves to D $\sharp$ 5, in an inner voice, as the melody reaches over to F $\sharp$ 5 (Example 10c).

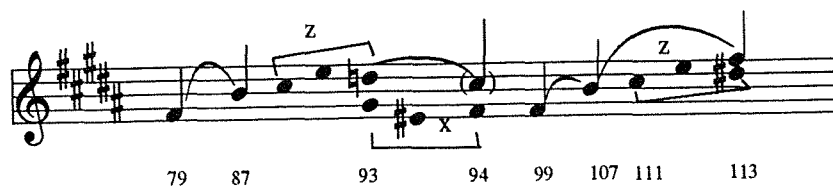
Example 10a. Motives of "Von ewiger Liebe"



Example 10b. "Von ewiger Liebe," mm. 63-64



Example 10c. "Von eiger Liebe," outline of the melody in stanza 3



The importance of the girl's declaration far outweighs her description of their love being as strong as iron or steel. This is evident in the title of the song, which is taken from the last line of the text.<sup>40</sup> Brahms almost doubles the length of this line by repeating the words "unsere Liebe" and "ewig." He sustains the second "ewig" for more beats than any other word in the whole song (mm. 115-16), and he further emphasizes this line by a phrase expansion. He sets the first two words to a two-measure segment, but instead of following it with another two measures (as he did in mm. 91-94), he uses a five-measure group, which he repeats and varies for the postlude. This five-measure group is based on a four-measure model in which the supertonic is expanded (mm. 114-115). In one of the most poignant instances of word painting in Brahms lieder, this prolongation of II precisely coincides with the crucial word "ewig."

In the middleground, the first two stanzas arpeggiate to scale degree 3, and then descend (Example 11). Stanza 3 changes mode but begins in a similar manner. The first attempt to reach scale degree #3, however, is denied. The melody rises from F#4 (m. 79) to B4 (m. 87), and then to C#5 (m. 90). Although it reaches to D#5, this note is not an arrival, rather it is part of a diminished seventh that resolves back to the dominant and to C#5. The second section begins with a repetition of the arpeggiation from F#4 to B4, but this time the melody bypasses the third and leaps to the climactic F#5—the *Kopftón*. In this way, the *Kopftón* arrives with the girl's most important words—the words that will finally put her partner at ease.

One might argue that scale degree 3 is the *Kopftón*, especially as the first two stanzas descend from scale degree #3.<sup>41</sup> In the first stanza scale degree #3 arrives on the last beat of m. 6, but it is weakly articulated and immediately descends into an inner voice to B4. In

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<sup>40</sup>On one of his autographs of this song, Brahms used the title "Ewig"; see Kalbeck, II: 128. Bozarth ("The 'Lieder' of Johannes Brahms," 52) describes the *Stichvorlage* that contains this change in title, and he reproduces its first page in his facsimile 1.6.

<sup>41</sup>It might also be possible to read the song from F#4, rising to F#5 in stanza 3. But the descending motives that begin on D5 and permeate the first two stanzas contradict such a reading.

stanza 2, the arrival of scale degree  $\flat 3$  in m. 49 is much more convincing, and strongly argues for reading the whole song from scale degree  $\flat 3$ . But in stanza 3, the arpeggiation, which is extended through to the final phrase, reaches up to scale degree 5, and scale degree  $\sharp 3$  is an inner voice (see Example 10c). Unlike the scale degrees  $\flat 3$  in the first two stanzas, scale degree 5 is strongly articulated: it arrives loudly on a downbeat, and is emphasized by the new 3/4 rhythmic patterns.<sup>42</sup> Although this stanza is in the tonic major, the melody has retained D  $\flat$  s until this climactic measure, when a B major triad descends from F  $\sharp$  5 (m. 113). This triad is the inversion, and major form, of the triad that appears in mm. 1-2 (in the bass) and 5-6 (in the voice).

Example 11. Reduction of “Von ewiger Liebe”

stanza 1      stanza 2      stanza 3

Although the resolution of the uneasy syncopations and the change to the tonic major occur at the very beginning of the last stanza, it is not until the promise of eternal love that the *Kopft* arrives, accompanied by the first melodic use of the tonic major triad. Furthermore, it is only in this final phrase that the A  $\flat$  totally disappears. Unlike “Vorschneller Schwur,” the *Kopft* in this song

<sup>42</sup>This hemiola in the accompaniment is interpreted as an emphatic device that points to the significance of the text, and therefore, it is not associated with the rhythmic unrest, or the hemiola of the first two stanzas.



coincides with a tonic chord in root position, and perhaps the stability of this arrival further symbolizes the steadfastness of the girl's promise.

As Agawu has noted, both "Vorschneller Schwur" and "Von ewiger Liebe" are characterized by the type of climactic conclusion that was common in the nineteenth century, and for which he developed his 'highpoint' theory. Although his original theory takes into account many of the secondary parameters that I have described, as for instance range and dynamics, Schenkerian analysis allows us to go one step further, as it reveals that the climaxes are not just foreground events, but are crucial, structural tones.

These two Brahms songs share many similarities; for example in both songs the *Kopft*on itself is part of an important motivic development. (In "Vorschneller schwur," it is the completion of the tonic triad in the upper register, and in "Von ewiger Liebe," it is the first appearance of the tonic major triad in the melody.) There are, however, a number of differences in the manner in which the *Kopft*on is articulated. In "Von ewiger Liebe," the arpeggiation to the *Kopft*on is prolonged for a much longer period of time; nevertheless, its arrival is clearly felt as the most exhilarating moment. In part this is due to the numerous foreground elements that are brilliantly coordinated to convey the importance of the girl's promise. Unlike the later song, here the *Kopft*on is given metrical support and is emphasized by a change in piano figuration. Moreover, its arrival coincides with the peak of a *crescendo*. Whereas in "Vorschneller Schwur" the piano's phrases remain in four-measure units for the climactic last lines, in "Von ewiger Liebe" the phrase expansion, in both the piano and voice, draws out the girl's most emphatic declaration of love. That is not to say that the reading of "Vorschneller Schwur" is less convincing than that of "Von ewiger Liebe." As I noted, this song also includes many details that support the arrival of the *Kopft*on, and point to the importance of the girl's vow to kiss her sweetheart. (These include the changes in the melody's phrases which convey her excitement.) The differences between the two settings are prompted by their respective texts. The triumphant tone of the commitment that concludes "Von ewiger Liebe" clearly warrants a much more majestic setting than the more private point of self-realization that ends "Vorschneller schwur."

I consider these Brahms songs to be mini-dramas in which Brahms sympathetically portrays the psychological plight of the protagonists. Although few writers have discussed this aspect of his songs, Elisabeth Schumann remarks: “It is astonishing, [that] in all [of] these songs a firm grasp of classical style goes hand in hand with the most finely drawn characterization and psychological insight.”<sup>43</sup> She concludes by citing a number of songs, including “Von ewiger Liebe,” that exemplify this remarkable feature. As in “Vorschneller Schwur,” this song culminates in an event that will profoundly change the protagonists’ lives. While at the surface level these turning points are conveyed by changes in mode, phrase structure, as well as rhythmic and melodic patterns, at a deeper level, they are reflected by the change in the direction of the structural line, from a gradual ascending arpeggiation to a descent. In this way the contour of the deep middleground offers a graphic representation of the text’s dramatic turning point.

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<sup>43</sup>*German Song*, trans. D. Millar Craig (New York, Chanticleer Press, 1948), 37.

**Appendix**

“Vorschneller Schwur,” op. 95, no. 5

A young girl vowed  
Never to wear flowers,  
Never to wear flowers,  
Never to drink wine,  
Never to drink wine,  
Never to kiss boys.  
Yesterday the girl vowed—  
Today she rues it already:

“If I wore flowers,  
I would look prettier!  
If I drank red wine,  
I would be merrier!  
If I kissed my sweetheart,  
I would feel happier  
If I kissed my sweetheart,  
I would feel happier!”

(trans. Stanley Appelbaum, *Johannes Brahms: Complete Songs for Solo Voice and Piano*, Series III [New York: Dover, 1980])

**Appendix (continued)**

“Von ewiger Liebe,” op. 43, no. 1

Dark, how dark in the woods and the fields!  
It is evening already; now the world becomes quiet.  
Nowhere a light and nowhere smoke,  
yes, even the lark is silent now.  
Out of the village comes the youth,  
bringing his sweetheart home.  
He leads her by the willow thickets,  
talking a great deal and about so many things:

“If you are ashamed and troubled,  
ashamed of me before the others,  
let love be broken off as suddenly,  
as quickly as we first came together.  
Let us part in the rain, let us part in the wind,  
as quickly as we first came together.”

The girl speaks:

“Our love shall not be parted!  
Iron is strong and steel very much so,  
our love is even stronger.  
Iron and steel are shaped in the forge,  
but who shall change our love?  
Iron and steel may be melted,  
but our love shall endure forever!”

(trans. after Philip Miller, *The Ring of Words: An Anthology of Song Texts* [1963; reprint, New York: Norton, 1973])